

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of treating a patient afflicted with a medical disorder selected from the group consisting of rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease, the method comprising administering to said patient a therapeutically effective amount of an IL-18 antagonist.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is soluble IL-18 receptor.
3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the soluble IL-18 receptor is a heterodimeric receptor.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is an antibody.
5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the antibody immunospecifically recognizes a component of an IL-18 receptor.
6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the antibody is a humanized antibody.
7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the antibody is a single-chain antibody.
8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is a soluble IL-18 binding protein.
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is administered one or more times per week.
10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is administered by subcutaneous injection.
11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is administered in combination with one or more compounds selected from the group consisting of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; analgesics; systemic steroids; antagonists of inflammatory cytokines; anti-inflammatory cytokines; antibodies against T cell surface proteins; anthralin; vitamin D3 and its analogs; oral retinoids; salicylic acid; methotrexate; cyclosporine; hydroxyurea; and sulfasalazine.

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12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is administered in combination with a TNF inhibitor.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the TNF inhibitor is TNFR:Fc.
14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the IL-18 antagonist is administered in combination with an antagonist to a cytokine selected from the group consisting of IFN γ , TGF β , IL-6 and IL-8.
15. The method of Claim 12 wherein the IL-18 antagonist and TNF inhibitor are administered in combination with an antagonist to a cytokine selected from the group consisting of IFN γ , TGF β , IL-6, IL-8, IL-12, and IL-15.

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